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Businesses suffer as water main repair closes street for a week



Workmen at the site of the burst water main in North Bar Street

Picture: Ilja Harvey

FIRMS STUNG BY BURST PIPE

BUSINESSES in Banbury have been left picking up the pieces after a burst water main closed North Bar Street for a week.

Engineers from Thames Water were called to the scene after the 30cm pipe burst in the early hours of Monday, August 15, sending water coursing down the street.

Throughout the subsequent repairs, which concluded on Monday, August 22, the road was shut – leading to a reported drop in footfall from several firms in the area.

Ilja Harvey, who runs deli and Dutch pancake house Little Amsterdam, said she believed her business had lost in the region of £3,000.

She said: "We lost quite a bit of money. I didn't close any events but we didn't have any people turning up, and it's my busiest time of the year."

"I am absolutely asking for compensation and we have started pursuing that with them."

She added that "wonderful" customers had started making a special effort to return following a post on Facebook imploring people to come in despite the closure.

Elsewhere Georgina Worrall, the manager of the Dog and Gun pub fur-

Hannah Somerville
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ther along the road, said staff had also noticed a dwindling number of people during the week.

She said: "The main difference was that taxi drivers wouldn't come down the road so we had quite a few problems, so people stopped coming out."

"We probably lost out. The week was really quiet, and it was quite frustrating because we weren't working as quickly as we could have."

The key drive-through route was shut between Horsefair and the junction with Southam Road, while a four-metre length of pipe under the car park was cut out and replaced.

Engineers also resurfaced 530 square metres of the road, pavement and car park – just a little more than the area of two tennis courts.

Luke Reeves, sales manager at Mark David Estate Agents, said despite the work he had seen long periods of what looked like inactivity.

He said: "It took a long time to fix, but it's no surprise it took a long time – the first day they had about 20 guys there, just walking around. They didn't do anything."

Thames Water spokesman Stuart White said the road had had to stay closed while staff made sure the area was safe, with no hidden 'voids' under the surface.

When a highly pressurised pipe bursts, the force of the water can wash away soil, sand and gravel, leaving gaping holes under tarmac and meaning it is not stable enough to support vehicles.

Ground-penetrating radar was used by crews to scan the road and check for voids.

Mr White said: "We're sorry for the disruption, and business owners who feel they're out of pocket from the closure can contact us for a claims form."

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Councillor calls for discussions on merger to restart

MORE than £100 million of potential savings from a mega-merger of councils is too big to walk away from, a top politician has claimed.

Ian Hudspeth, pictured, leader of Oxfordshire County Council, said the current situation – with six councils and more than 270 councillors – was “not acceptable to taxpayers”.

His comments came after the leaders of the four district councils and city council said reforms had been abandoned because an agreement could not be reached.

The county council favours having a single council for all of Oxfordshire, which two reports released this month said could save £113 million over five years.

But the districts and city say such a large council would be less democratic and have instead suggested having a northern council, a city council and a southern council.

They have now suggested that a devolution bid put forward in February – ditched due to their row with the county council – could be revived instead without any council shake-ups.

But Mr Hudspeth said: “The two reports identified massive savings that could be reinvested in services that residents want, so it is important we all come round the table to discuss them.”

“Nothing should be ruled out.

“I would like to see what the district councils’ proposals are for saving this money, because at the moment they seem to be the status quo – which both reports said was not an option.

“They should not be walking away from these savings.”



Midwives make plea to help save maternity unit

Hundreds hear call for role of hospital in community to be recognised by trust

Hannah Somerville
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MIDWIVES at the Horton General Hospital broke their silence last week with an impassioned plea to preserve the maternity unit.

Hundreds of people packed into St Mary’s Church in Banbury for a question and answer session with Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

After two hours of heated debate, midwife Kirsty Radcliffe took to the stage to read a collective statement from those working at the unit. She said: “Until now, our presence and voices have remained quiet. We plead to you to reject your trust’s contingency plans, and pull together with agencies and doctors. We demand that our place within OGH is acknowledged and you recognise the role the whole of the Horton General Hospital plays in this community.”

The speech received a standing ovation from the audience and ended a final public discussion on the issue before it is decided



Hundreds of campaigners and concerned residents fill St Mary’s Church for a final public Q&A on maternity services at the Horton General Hospital; inset, Kirsty Radcliffe

on next Wednesday. OGH board members including chief executive Bruno Holthof, medical director Tony Berendt and clinical services director Paul Brennan joined the panel alongside obstetrics experts and members of Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group to take questions from the public and the Keep the Horton General campaign.

The maternity unit at the Horton is set to become temporarily midwife-led from September due to a lack of middle-grade doctors filling vacant posts in obstetrics.

Catherine Greenwood, senior obstetrician at the John Radcliffe Hospital, said since April OGH had found only a handful of suitable applicants – all later dropped out.

She said: “There is a national shortage of people in training grades and you have a better chance of progressing your career if you go to a recognised post.”

Positions have been advertised on a premium salary of £38,200 per annum on a 12-month contract.

If the unit goes midwife-led, mothers deemed high risk will have to travel to the John Radcliffe Hospital where capacity is being increased for an extra 1,000 births a year.

A single ambulance is set to be parked outside the Horton General Hospital to convey expectant mothers to the JR if necessary.

Furious audience members asked what would happen if complications such as shoulder dystocia or post-partum haemorrhage occurred during a ‘low-risk’ birth.

The meeting was continually interrupted by heckling and many of those in the audience suggested OGH did not want to fill the posts.

On behalf of the CCG, Dr Paul Park, a partner at Hightown Surgery in Banbury, said: “As a local GP I feel the anger and pain in this room. But if you can’t recruit you can’t recruit. We are not talking about giving up but that’s how it is. It’s a tragedy and we have to deal with it.”

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'Heroic' dog given prize for bravery and courage

Mabel helps Alex, 12, who has Asperger's Syndrome, cope with everyday tasks

Naomi Herring
nherring@nqo.com

A COURAGEOUS canine is among a group of inspiring Britons to be honoured nationally for showing "remarkable courage" and bravery.

Four-year-old assistance dog Mabel, from Banbury, has won the title of Britain's Hero Pet for helping to provide a lifeline for youngster Alex White.

The 12-year-old, also from Banbury, has high-functioning autism and Asperger's Syndrome, which can result in massive sensory overload and meant that days out and holidays were not possible for his family.

This changed after being matched with the black Labrador by Dogs for Good charity – based in the town – and their special relationship has won them the award.

Alex said: "Mabel means so much to me."

"I'm so shocked that Mabel and me won an award. It's going to go in my bedroom."

Mum, Michelle White, said the sense of calm Mabel brought had opened up a whole new world to Alex.

She added: "Things that other



Alex White with Mabel, named Britain's Hero Pet

families take for granted just were not possible for us before, but Mabel has changed all that."

"Alex had never had a friend before but now he has a best friend in Mabel."

"For us she has been a complete and utter hero and an absolute life-line to Alex."

The dedicated dog won a "golden bone" at the Charles Holland Awards last week.

Mabel helps Alex through any anxiety by providing a calming companion and assisting with everyday tasks, including helping him cross roads, accompanying him on difficult trips to the shops or dentist, and sleeping by his side to make him feel safe in his bedroom.

Mabel has been trained to read circumstances in which Alex may become anxious and diffuse the situation with skills such as a full body rest, licking his feet or allowing him to stroke her.

Falklands veteran Simon Weston led the judging panel. He said: "I was honoured to be asked by Amplifon to be one of the judges for the Charles Holland Awards for Brave Britons, because all the finalists had truly remarkable stories."

"It was a very tough decision. "When I read [Alex and] Mabel's story it was truly touching.

"It is wonderful to see the unsung heroes in our midst – the truly remarkable people who are an inspiration to us all – finally given the recognition they deserve."

The awards recognised members of the public and existing and ex-military personnel who have shown – like founder and Second World War hero Charles Holland – remarkable acts of courage, bravery and incredible selflessness, showing them to be the 'Best Of British'.

Job hunt at fairs

VACANCIES in retail, security, care and office work are up for grabs at two job fairs next month.

The first is in Banbury on September 14, followed by Bicester on September 28. Run by Cherwell District Council and Jobcentre Plus, they are open to all ages and entry is free.

Banbury Job Fair runs from 4pm to 7.30pm at the Town Hall.

Bicester Job Fair, from 5pm to 7pm, is at the town's library in Franklins House.

Lynn Pratt, Cherwell's lead member for the economy, said: "In this day and age employers are often swamped with applications sent online but the chance to meet candidates informally and face-to-face can streamline the recruitment process."

Crews fight blaze

TWO fire engines were called to a house in Beatrice Drive, Banbury, on Wednesday afternoon when a blaze started while the owner was cooking.

The incident was first reported at 4.18pm. Officers arrived to find thick black smoke coming from the annexe at the rear of the house.

Two officers entered the building and put out the flames using hoses.

Watch manager David Edge said: "This fire was caused by the home owner becoming distracted while cooking – a common cause of fires. This is a good reminder to everyone to test your smoke alarms."

Restaurants safe

FRANKIE and Benny's in Oxford, Witney and Banbury will not be affected by the chain's plans to close dozens of restaurants nationally.

The Restaurant Group announced the closure of 33 Frankie and Benny's and Chiquito after a 'challenging trading period'. The firm also blamed unsuccessful menu development and price increases for its loss of customers.

Festival-goers help to recycle six tonnes of glass

MORE than six tonnes of glass was collected and recycled following last month's Cropredy Festival, council officers have said.

The event, held near Banbury, between August 11 and 13, featured sets by pop

veterans Madness and folk-rock favourites Steeleye Span and Fairport Convention – who organise the festival.

Throughout the festival – properly named Fairport's Cropredy Convention – fans were encouraged to sort their used

glass into recycling bins provided by Cherwell District Council.

The council's lead member for 'clean and green' Debbie Pickford said: "Six tonnes is not far off the record we set last year, so I congratulate the fans."

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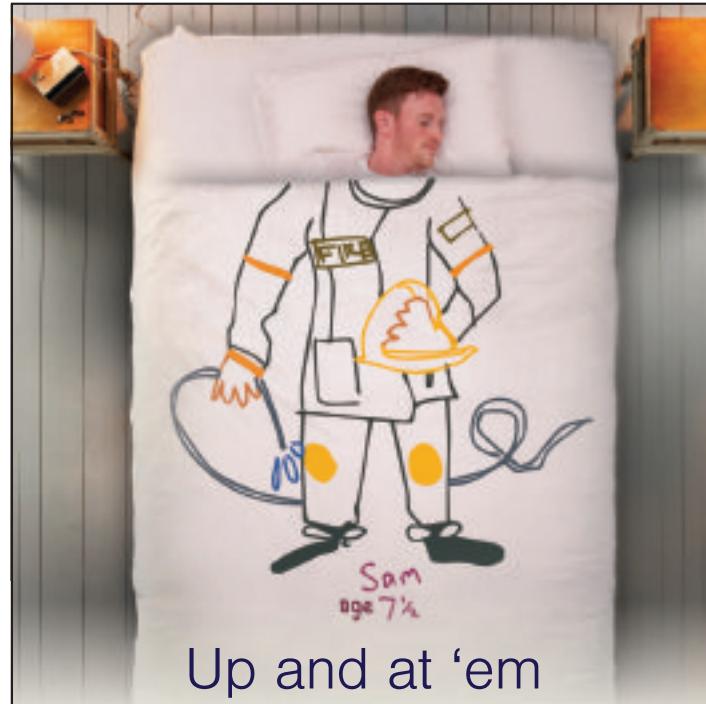
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Cabaret tribute to classic character



A MUSICAL cabaret inspired by a star from 1967 film classic *The Graduate* is heading to Banbury.

Theatre-goers can enjoy a night at The Mill Arts Centre for *A touch of Mrs Robinson* as actress Fiona Coffey plays one of history's greatest cougars.

The performance will wow the audience with a live band directed by top London cabaret artist Michael Roulston.

Fiona Coffey, pictured, made her debut on the London cabaret scene with this self-devised

tribute to her alter-ego Mrs Robinson in 2015.

She also performed at this year's London Festival of Cabaret.

This time around she will be entertaining the auditorium in Banbury and she tells of her fascination with the character Mrs Robinson. The show has been praised for its sassy, witty and thought-provoking take on the old-time classic.

Ms Coffey confesses to a love of the character, and she is a jazz

singer by night, hosting performances at the Ram Jam Club.

She has also performed at London clubs the Vortex, 606 Club and Crazy Cogs but after being told repeatedly told she was "more cabaret than jazz" she moved to try her hand at that instead and produced *A touch of Mrs Robinson*.

The show is taking place on September 15 and tickets can be purchased at the box office by calling 01295 279002.

Blaze breaks out at coffee factory

Crews contain fire which was found to have started in one of building's dryers

Naomi Herring
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FIRE engines tore through the town on Friday to tackle a blaze which had broken out at the iconic former Mondelez factory.

The blaze proved a challenge for the crews to locate among the vast coffee making machinery, but was tracked down to one of the coffee dryers.

Teams from Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service were called to the extensive complex, now owned by Jacobs Douwe Egberts, in Ruscote Avenue at 6.30am.

Initially it was not known where the fire was located, apart from it was somewhere in the main coffee processing tower.

Group manager Rob MacDoughall said: "This is a very complex site with systems in place to assist us when a fire occurs.

"Our crews worked extremely hard in arduous conditions to limit any damage.

"Running out lengths of fire hose in full protective clothing is never easy, but when this involves staircases and warm weather, it really tests the physical conditions of the crews.

"Everyone worked extremely hard."

Six fire crews from across the district were called in to help tackle the challenging blaze plus engines from further afield in Warwickshire, Northamptonshire and Buckinghamshire.

After an extensive search for the fire, crews found it was a coffee dryer that had gone up in flames and using the sprinkler system, fire fighters were able to put out the blaze.

Thames Valley Police spokeswoman Charlotte Redman said officers were called to the scene at 7am and quickly confirmed everyone was out of the building.

Emergency services remained at the factory throughout the day to ensure the fire was completely out.

The Banbury factory has been an iconic building in the town as one of its major employers since 1964.

Originally the Kraft Foods Banbury factory it produced coffee brands such as Kenco, Carte Noire and Maxwell House, and has been a major employer in the town since it was built.

Civic champion has passed away

A DEVOTED fundraiser, campaigner and former councillor has died in his late 90s.

Jack Friswell OBE served as leader of the former Banbury Borough Council, deputy lieutenant of Oxfordshire, magistrate, alderman, town mayor and president of both the

town's rugby and rotary clubs – but is likely to be best remembered as its most passionate fundraiser for good causes.

Over the course of his life Mr Friswell raised more than £5 million for appeals including St Mary's Church, the Horton General Hospital, the Fine Lady on a

White Horse statue and others. He was an active supporter of campaigns to preserve services at the Horton.

He received his OBE in 1980 and in 2006 was the first to become an Honorary Burgess of Banbury, the equivalent of being given freedom of the town.



Jack Friswell OBE has died



Victoria Prentis Westminster Views

MP FOR NORTH OXFORDSHIRE



Second not minutes matter when pregnant woman goes into labour

WHILE August is usually quiet at Westminster, locally we have been dealing with a crisis.

On July 20, the Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust told me that there would not be sufficient obstetricians available to work at the Horton General Hospital to ensure the safe provision of maternity services.

The Trust has therefore said that they will have no choice but to suspend consultant-led maternity services, and to downgrade to a midwife-only unit by October.

The Special Care Baby Unit would also have to close. Mothers wanting epidurals, needing caesarean sections or who require any higher level of intervention will have no choice but to go to the John Radcliffe to have their baby.

As many of you will know, I was born at the Horton, as were my two sisters. Four generations of my family have been treated there.

My personal attachment to the hospital is strong. But even without this connection, I would find the Trust's contingency plan completely incomprehensible.

North Oxfordshire is growing. We have new housing in both Banbury and



Bicester which will inevitably bring swathes of young, and expanding, families. Many of us avoid driving into Oxford because of the gridlock on the roads. Journeys often take well over an hour at peak times, especially from the more remote parts of the county. Seconds, not minutes, matter when complications arise mid-labour.

How an ambulance transporting a mother experiencing complications (even after the safe delivery of her baby) would navigate its way through the traffic doesn't bear thinking about. There is little or no public transport

from the north of the county to the John Radcliffe. Parking is often extremely difficult.

Problems with recruitment must not be used as an excuse to deem a service unsafe. The Trust should be thinking proactively and inventively.

Alternatives need to be considered, including asking whether consultants currently based at the John Radcliffe would be willing to cover rotas at the Horton.

To an outside observer, it seems like the Horton is being set up to fail: the downgrading of the maternity unit will

have an inevitable impact on the remaining acute services. The domino effect is particularly strong in a small hospital like ours.

If my inbox is anything to go by, these are concerns shared by many of you. I have made all these points abundantly clear in the conversations I have had with Trust officials, representatives from the Clinical Commissioning Group and special advisers at the Department of Health. My colleagues in neighbouring constituencies, including our former Prime Minister David Cameron, have said they are behind us. Local Labour Party councillors also support the campaign. The Board makes their final decision on August 31.

For me, the only responsible option is for the planned reduction in services at the Horton to be suspended while the potential to move patients or clinical staff from Oxford is properly explored. Without this, the consultation process is meaningless. The Trust should not forget that the Horton General Hospital was given to the people of North Oxfordshire by Mary Ann Horton and her family almost 150 years ago. We must bear the spirit of that gift in mind when making plans for the future.

Visit victoriaprentis.com/horton-general-hospital/

Knifeman jailed for 30 months

A BANBURY man has been jailed after holding a knife to his victim's throat and demanding money.

Ryan Kane, pictured, of Juniper Court, pleaded guilty to one count of affray and one count of robbery at Oxford Crown Court on Monday where he was later sentenced to 30 months in prison, police said.



The sentence relates to two separate incidents in which the 31-year-old threatened victims and demanded money.

On February 27, Kane broke into a house in Prescott Avenue, Banbury where a 27-year-old man was sleeping.

After ransacking the house for money he forced the victim on to a bed, held him by the throat and held a knife to his throat.

The man agreed to go to a cashpoint at which point he escaped to safety.

Kane was arrested the following day and was charged in connection with the affray on February 29.

On October 17, 2015, at around 1am, Kane, along with three other men, threatened a 48-year-old man in Edmunds Road, Banbury.

The man handed over money after Kane threatened to set his friends on him if he did not.

Kane was charged with the robbery on November 23, 2015.

He was sentenced to 16 months' imprisonment for the affray and 14 months' imprisonment for the robbery, to run consecutively, making a total sentence of 30 months' imprisonment.

Dinghy maker in Olympic contest

Boats used by European teams in Rio were made at factory in Banbury

Kieran Davey
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WHILE people up and down Oxfordshire cheered on Team GB at the Rio Olympics, one group in particular had their hearts in their mouths.

Staff from LaserPerformance, a huge manufacturing firm which builds laser dinghies from its plant in Banbury, were responsible for handcrafting the boats used by European sailors during the games.

Staff and directors were glued to their screens to see how their prized boats performed on the biggest stage of all.

British sailors Nick Thompson and Alison Young steered their craft to the finish line on Marina da Gloria in Guanabara Bay.

LaserPerformance has built all its boats in Banbury for more than 30 years, and works with firms and organisations including Cherwell District Council.

The council's lead member for estates and the economy, Lynn Pratt, said: "The Olympics reflect the culmination of years of hard work both by athletes and



Great Britain's Nick Thompson in action during the Men's Laser Race 01 at the Rio Olympic Games

the manufacturers who supply their equipment.

"Olympic sailors rely on the precision engineering of their boats to allow them to show the best of their skills and athleticism.

"We are proud to have an Olympic-class manufacturer based in the town, and we are delighted to see the laser dinghies on the water in Rio."

In the end it was mixed results in Rio for the European teams in the laser men's gold medal, which was won by Tom Burton

from Australia, with Mr Thompson coming sixth.

But European teams cleaned up in the women's laser radial event, where world champion Alison Young finished in eighth place.

Laser dinghies were first produced in the 1970s and since then have become one of the world's most popular racing class dinghies.

The boat's responsive nature is believed to mean a higher degree of skill and athleticism is needed than with other boats.



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Extra help for holiday hubs

MORE places had to be put on for summer holiday activities by a council after nearly 1,000 were snapped up in just two weeks.

Children in North Oxfordshire signed up to take part in the Cherwell District Council summer scheme and the council had to take on more staff to cater to demand.

Over the first fortnight, 917 places were booked up for youngsters to turn their hand to anything from trampolining to archery.

Cherwell District Council deputy leader George Reynolds said: "There is no doubt that the holiday hubs are a popular resource for both parents and children as the first two weeks of bookings speak for themselves."

"For parents, they offer a practical and affordable solution to childcare issues and are a great way to keep children occupied in a safe and supervised environment."

The sessions were hosted in Banbury at the North Oxfordshire Academy, the Cooper School in Bicester and The Warriner School in Bloxham.

Strong results

BANBURY'S schools celebrated a strong set of GCSE results last week.

At North Oxfordshire Academy 52 per cent of pupils scored at least five A* to C grades including English and maths – up 13 per cent from last year.

At Blessed George Napier Catholic School 72 per cent of pupils achieved English and maths at grade C and above, and 67 per cent got at least five GCSEs including English and maths at grades A* to C.

Early closure for centres?

Staff shortages may mean children's services close at some centres prematurely

Matt Oliver
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UNDER-THREAT children's centres across Oxfordshire could close earlier than expected due to an exodus of staff.

The county council warned the reorganisation within the next five months could lead to "significant movement" and force it to axe universal services in some areas.

It previously said they would stop at the end of March, when funding is set to be pulled from 31 of 44 children's centres and two of seven early intervention hubs.

But a letter sent out this month – seen by the *Banbury Cake* – cast doubt over this, suggesting it would "not always be possible" to keep centres open until then.

Jim Leivers, director of children's services, wrote: "It is also likely due to staff shortages we will have to cease the delivery of other open access provision in both children's centres and hubs in the coming months.

"We will work hard to avoid this by clustering resources... and will give families and partners as much notice as possible."

The letter sparked urgent calls for clarity from campaigners trying to save the centres, who accused the county council of "mov-



Campaigners protest against children's centre closures outside County Hall in September 2015; right, Jim Leivers



ing the goalposts".

Jill Huish, of the Save Oxfordshire's Children's Centres campaign group, said: "The council has had the axe hanging over children's centres and their staff for three years.

"If they are now saying they are going to have to scramble staff from some centres to keep others open, what does that mean for rural centres? We need less smoke and mirrors and more clarity, as soon as possible."

Bob Price, leader of Oxford City Council, said there were "grave concerns" about the possibility of early closures.

He added: "The evidence shows they have performed an extremely

valuable function in dealing with the kind of problems that can occur in families at an early stage, which can significantly reduce costs to children's social care further down the line.

"The closures could mean more problems, so we have grave concerns about that."

"We are doing what we can with community centres to provide re-placements but it will be nowhere near as effective."

The reorganisation of children's services will see the county's 44 children's centres and seven early intervention hubs replaced with a new service for children aged up to 19.

Only eight of the centres and hubs

would remain fully funded by the county council, with a further two kept open up as 'bases'.

Eight more would be self-funding 'outreach centres', mainly offering daycare.

A legal challenge against the shake-up was mounted at the High Court in July, but a judge threw it out.

Melinda Tilley, county council cabinet member for children, education and families, said children's centres would be kept open "as long as possible".

She added: "We are hoping that community groups will continue to come forward, but we knew [staff losses] would happen and you really can't blame people for leaving."

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No capital gains in sequel

BROTHERHOOD (15, 105 mins)

Drama/Thriller/Romance. Noel Clarke, Shanika Warren-Markland, Arnold Oceng, Cornell John, Jaza Maza, Olivia Chenery, Tonia Sotiropoulou, Adjoa Andoh, Leeshon Alexander, Rosa Caduri. Director: Noel Clarke

THIRD time's no charm for director, writer and actor Noel Clarke as he concludes his streetwise London-set trilogy, which began 10 years ago with *Kidulthood* and continued forlornly two years later with *Adulthood*.

The final chapter is self-indulgent and lacks dramatic momentum, with a sluggish running time that feels considerably longer than 105 minutes.

The youthful swagger and energy of earlier pictures has completely evaporated from *Brotherhood*, which returns to the unforgiving streets of the capital in the company of a beleaguered father, who is trying to break the cycle of violence that landed him in prison.

Clarke's penchant for spewing 20 words of dialogue when five will suffice is still in evidence and at least one scene teeters on the brink of risibility for its tearful earnestness.

The script gives pitifully short shrift to the female characters, who are two-dimensional and repeatedly objectified.

Were it not for a memorable supporting turn from Arnold Oceng and an amusing running gag about the desirability of a supermarket reward card, this would be an interminable slog from beginning to laughable end.

Sam Peel (Clarke) has pieced his life back together following his spell behind bars with the help of his mother (Adjoa Andoh), lawyer girlfriend Kayla (Shanika Warren-Markland) and their two children.

Ghosts of the past return to haunt the former jailbird when

gun-toting thugs shoot his brother and leave behind a threatening message that reads WE'RE NOT DONE.

It transpires that old adversary Uncle Curtis (Cornell John) and local gangland leader Daley (Jason Maza) are determined to lure Sam back to the dark side by threatening the safety of his loved ones.

A femme fatale called Janette (Tonia Sotiropoulou) tests Sam's loyalty, while Daley unleashes his underlings including the menacing Hugs (Leeshon Alexander) and whip-smart Poppy (Rosa Caduri).

Faced with losing everything, Sam feels he has no choice but to revert to threats and intimidation to survive, and he calls upon wisecracking best friend Henry (Oceng) as his brother in dire straits.

Brotherhood is one slice of gritty urban angst too far.

The leading man puts himself through an emotional wringer without once tugging our heartstrings.

John's supporting turn as the vengeance-seeking antagonist is one wide-eyed snarl short of pantomime villain.

Explosions of violence don't always serve the ramshackle narrative and any pertinent moral conundrums about meeting force with greater force are lost amidst the navel-gazing and gratuitous nudity.

SAUSAGE PARTY (15, 89 mins)

YOU may never look at a basket of groceries the same way again after this foul-mouthed computer-animated comedy co-directed by Greg Tiernan and Conrad Vernon.

At Shopwell's supermarket, managed by Darren (voiced by Paul Rudd), the food and items that festoon the aisles begin each day with a rousing song, hoping they will be chosen by one of the customers and spirited to the "great beyond" outside of the sliding front doors. Among these hopefuls is a sex-crazed sausage called Frank



Noel Clarke as Sam in *Brotherhood* and, inset, *Sausage Party*

(Seth Rogen), who is desperate to lose his virginity with his hot dog roll girlfriend Brenda (Kristen Wigg). When a jar of unopened honey mustard (Danny McBride) is returned to Shopwell's, Frank, Brenda and their perishable chums discover that the outside world isn't the nirvana they always hoped.

In the search for answers, Frank journeys to the alcohol aisle to seek counsel from Firewater (Bill Hader). Meanwhile, a lesbian taco called Teresa (Salma Hayek) makes lusty overtures to Brenda and a stunted sausage called Barry (Michael Cera) discovers first-hand the horrors that lurk beyond the checkout tills.

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Cake Bookworm

An Unsafe Haven by Nada Awar
Jarrar is published in hardback by Borough Press, priced £12.99 (ebook £8.99)

AN UNSAFE HAVEN is the fourth novel from Lebanese author Nada Awar Jarrar, a previous Commonwealth Writers' Prize winner for her first book *Somewhere, Home*. Based in contemporary Beirut, this latest release focuses on the ongoing refugee crisis born out of neighbouring war-torn Syria. Tackling this subject is certainly a bold undertaking and one that requires delicate handling – something that Jarrar is evidently most capable of. The story is based around the lives of its main characters, married couple Hannah and Peter, and their artist friend Anas, who find themselves wrestling with the complexities of displacement; questioning their priorities and their loyalty in a way that brings home the

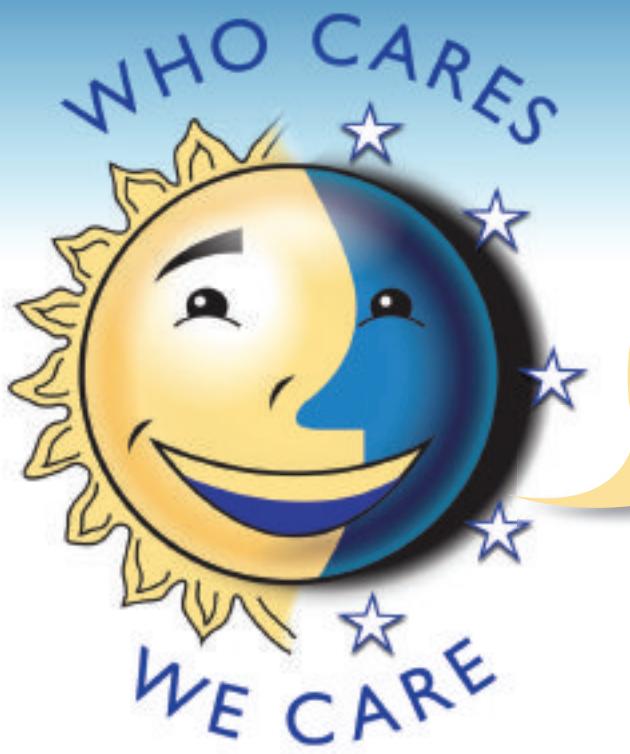
heartbreaking reality of humanity caught in the crossfire of war. Each character is portrayed in wonderfully vivid detail, each with a unique sense of identity and home that they find challenged and changed. *An Unsafe Haven* is an absolute triumph for Jarrar who is able to truthfully depict the story in a way that very few other writers could. Bold, tender and personal – this is an absolute must-read.

Set Me Free by Hina Belitz is published in paperback by Headline Review, priced £7.99 (ebook £3.99)

IN HER debut novel, Pakistan-born discrimination lawyer Hina Belitz breaks the silence surrounding honour crimes and domestic violence in a deeply moving, quietly powerful story of one girl's struggle to find hope and strength when confronted by oppression. The arrival of a son is a cause for celebration in Lahore. But when Mani's brother, Nu, is born, the

colour of his skin soon makes him the subject of malicious rumours. As the rumour mill intensifies, the siblings are forced to flee Pakistan with their mother to start a new life in London. But theirs is only a temporary reprieve. When the past catches up with them, Mani is left to care for her younger brother. Desperate to make things better, Mani thinks she has finally found salvation for her and Nu in the promise of marriage. Belitz's novel opens with a brutal bang, a moment that has the potential to define both the novel and its characters in a tragic vein. Yet this is a story not of surrender but of resilience, of hope overcoming adversity, of finding strength against powerlessness. Belitz tackles difficult realities head-on in a narrative that is necessarily hard-hitting. As upsetting and disturbing as Mani's story is, ultimately its message proves to be empowering and inspiring.

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Oxfordshire Listings

Events

THURSDAY

35 Conference of the European Bone and Joint Infection Society:

The Examination Schools, Oxford University, 75-81 High Street, Oxford. EBJS is dedicated in the battle against infections in the musculoskeletal system and appeals not only to orthopaedic surgeons but also to microbiologists, plastic surgeons, infectious disease specialists, molecular biologists and material science specialists. Each year the annual EBJS Conference grows bigger and gathers more than 500 participants from all over the world. Inquiries: <https://go.evnt.com/58170-0>. EBJS Member £340, non-member £415. 8am. One-day registration £150. 045 7020 0305.

Complice – Diving Into The Mess:

Old Fire Station, 40 George Street, Oxford. Led by a Complice Associate performer, this two-day workshop looks at the presence of the performer, exploring when and why a person is watchable. <http://www.oldfirestation.org.uk/event/complice-diving-into-the-mess/>. 11am. £130. 01865 305305.

Grove RFC Girls' Rugby: Grove RFC, Recreation Lane, Grove. Contact rugby union for girls aged 11 to 18 in three age groups led by RFU qualified coaches. 7pm. Annual membership £85 after three free sessions. 07970 292322.

Harcourt Arboretum Extended Evening Opening: University of Oxford Harcourt Arboretum, Peacock Lodge, Nuneham Courtenay. 'Behind the Scenes: Meet the Tree Team' guided walk. 5pm. Normal entrance fees apply. 01865 343501.

Premier Tennis Multi Sport Activity

Camps: The Leys Recreation Ground, Station Road, Witney. Holiday camps for ages five to 12. With tennis in the mornings and a range of team games including football, crazy golf, rounders and Olympic sports in the afternoon. Go to <https://premiertennis.co.uk/venue/leys-recreation-ground-witney> for more information. 8.30am. 01865 689754.

FRIDAY

Discover and Play: Earth Trust, Little Wittenham. Forest School for the under-fives. No need to book. 10am. £4 suggested donation per child. 01865 407792.

Quiz Night Fundraiser for Katie: The Nightingale, Nightingale Place, Langford, Bicester. In January 2016 Katie was diagnosed with a rare type of terminal cancer, and treatment in the UK would not be effective. Katie and her family researched and found a specialist in Germany who hopes to slow the disease, using targeted chemotherapy treatments. Katie will then need Immunotherapy, currently only available in Tokyo. The quiz is free. There will be a cost of £5 per slip for Play Your Cards Right and Bingo. Raffle tickets will also be on sale at £1 each and all proceeds will go to Katie's treatment fund. 7pm. 01869 369291.

SATURDAY

Author Talk - Harry Sidebottom: Summertown Library, South Parade, Summertown. Part of Oxfordshire Libraries' A Midsummer Night's Read Adult Reading Challenge 2016.

Bestselling author Harry Sidebottom, Oxford academic and author of the *Warrior of Rome* and *Throne of the Caesars* series of books, will discuss his work. Tickets for the event are free but limited, contact the library directly. 11am. 01865 558290.

Book-Making Workshop: Old Fire Station, 40 George Street, Oxford. Join OFS studio artist Lauren Baldwin and learn the art of book making. Using Lauren's hand printed papers as covers,

create a concertina book and a Japanese stab stitched book to take home and fill to your heart's content. Materials will be provided. 1pm. £5. 01865 263990.

Flower, Plant and Crafts Show: Northcourt Centre, Northcourt Road, Abingdon. The Abingdon Horticultural Society Autumn Show. 2pm. £1, but free for club members. 01235 203873.

Hailey Village Show: Village Hall, Middletown, Hailey. Flowers, fruit & vegetables, cookery, photography, floral arrangements and children's classes. See www.haileywestoxon.org for full schedule. 2pm. Free. 01993 899125.

History & Nature Rides: Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway, Station Approach, Station Road, Chinnor.

Children £1 with any accompanied by a fare-paying adult on hour-long History & Nature ride on vintage diesel bubblecar with commentary from railway volunteers about the history of the line and the local area it traverses. There are four timetabled at 10.30am, 12pm, 1.45pm & 3.15pm. Adult £11, senior £10, child £1. 07979 055366.

Paul Nash and the Wittenham Clumps – Talk and Walk: St Agatha's Church, Brightwell Street, near War Memorial, Brightwell cum Sotwell. For the artist Paul Nash (1889 - 1946), the Wittenham Clumps were a major source of inspiration. As the Tate's Paul Nash exhibition approaches, two special walks, each beginning with an illustrated talk, will explore Nash's enduring fascination with this landscape and the places where he worked. Details and booking at www.nashclumps.org/news.html. 10am. £15.

Real Ale Festival: The Chequers, Northampton Road, Weston on the Green. 4pm. £1. 01869 351982.

Restore Autumn Fair: Fleet Meadow, Sandringham Road, Didcot. Restore is an Oxfordshire charity that supports people with mental health issues. 11.30am. Free. 01235 817215.

Witney NCT Jubilee Jamboree: Madley Park Hall, Northfield Farm Lane, Witney. 2pm. Free.

SUNDAY

All Saints' Church Summer Fair: Great Western Drive Park, Foxhall Road, Didcot. Fun for all the family, including stalls, face painting, refreshments. 2pm. Free. 01235 511448.

Bicester Rugby Minis Open Day: BSA Sportsground, Akeman Street, Chesterton. Open day for the mini section of Bicester Rugby Club. Opportunity for children aged five to 13 to try rugby for free. Free hotdogs for those who take part. www.bicesterrugby.com 10am. Free.

Bingo: Marston Royal British Legion, Hadlow Road, Marston. 7pm. Free. 01865 243991.

Bus Rides on vintage vehicles: Oxford Bus Museum, Next to Hanborough Railway Station, Long Hanborough. The museum will be open from 10.30 am until 4.30pm. Free vintage bus rides will run at 12.15pm and 2.45pm. 10.30am. Adults £5, over 60 £4, 5-16 £3. 01993 811003.

National Garden Scheme: Church Farm Field, Epwell, Banbury. Woods, arboretum with wild flowers (planting started in 1992). Over 90 different trees and shrubs in 4.5 acres. Paths cut through trees for easy access. Lawn tennis court and croquet lawns. Dogs on leads. Teas. 2pm. Adult £2, children free.

National Gardens Scheme: Broughton Grange, Wykham Lane, Broughton. An impressive 25-acre garden and light woodland in an Oxfordshire setting. The centrepiece is a large walled garden created by Tom Stuart-Smith in 2001. Vision has been used to blend the gardens into the countryside. Outstanding herbaceous

To get an event of any kind listed here, enter the details into our easy-to-use online database at thisisoxfordshire.co.uk/events

Please add your event no later than ten days before the day of publication.

planting. Formal and informal areas. Plant sale. Teas. Coaches welcome. 10am. Adult £7, children free.

National Gardens Scheme: Bolters Farm, Chilson, Chipping Norton. Newly opening this year. A cherished old cottage garden restored over the last nine years. Tumble walls and sloping lawns down to a stream with natural planting and character. Partial wheelchair access. Teas. 10.30am. Adult £4, children free.

Rotary Dragon Boat Festival: Rye Farm Meadow, Near Abingdon Bridge. Boats are 40 foot long and decorated with a Chinese dragon head and tail. They need a crew of 16 rowers and a drummer. On the day spectators can enjoy the racing, and there is a fun fair, entertainment, food and drink and craft stalls. 10am. Free for spectators, entry fee for teams.

Senior Specials and cream teas: Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway, Station Approach, Station Road, Chinnor. 10am. Adult £11, Senior £5, Child £6. 07979 055366.

Wychwood Forest Fair: Wychwood Forest Fair, Cornbury Park, Charlbury. Entertainment, food, rural craft demonstrations, music and shopping. 11am. £7, under 16s free. 01865 815423.

MONDAY

Mums Meet Mondays: Rugrats and Halfpints, Beaumont Road, Banbury. 9.30am. £1 per child. 01295 250060.

TUESDAY

Adoption Information Evening: Didcot Civic Hall, Britwell Road, Didcot. Starting with a brief presentation before you're given the opportunity to talk, in private, with an experienced adoption social workers. Call or email info@adoption-focus.org.uk to book a place. 6pm. 0845 519 0539.

NCT Bumps and Babies Group: The Coffee Shed, The Leys recreational ground Station Lane Witney. Relaunch party. 10am. £1 donation for refreshments.

WEDNESDAY

Bicester and Kidlington Ramblers: St Giles Church, Nocke. Leisurely 4.5-mile circular walk to Beckley and back via fields and woodland. Leader Mary Whitehead. 10am. 07906 895064.

The Archaeology Of The Westgate Centre – City of Oxford: The Oxfordshire Museum, Park Street, Woodstock. Speaker David Radford, Oxford Archaeology. Free to members, £2 for guests. 7.30pm.

Music

THURSDAY

The Cellar, Frewin Court, Oxford: Slow Down Molasses, Flights Of Helios, The Beckoning Fair Ones. Canadian rockers on UK tour plus local alt-rock outfit. 8pm. £5.

Joe's Bar & Grill, 260 Banbury Road, Oxford: Toly's Funk Quartet. Jazz-funk. 8pm. Free.

Unicorn Theatre, Checker Walk, Abingdon: Ninebarrow. Multi-award winning folk duo. 7pm. £12.

The Wheatsheaf, 129 High Street, Oxford: Indica Blues, Grub, Beaver Fuel. 8pm. £5.

Jude The Obscure, 54 Walton Street, Oxford: Jesters. Contemporary

folk plus support from Mark Pigeon. 8.30pm. Free. entry.

Fat Lil's, 64a Corn Street, Witney: Michele Stoddart. Solo show from vocalist with Mercury-Prize-nominated and double platinum sellers The Magic Numbers. 7.30pm. £10 (adv), £12 (otd).

FRIDAY

Angel, Market Square, Witney: Laurence. Keyboard vocalist performing hits from 60's to present. Free. 9pm. 01993 703238.

Berinsfield SC, Green Furlong, Berinsfield: Jamie Felton. With hits from 60's to present. 9pm. 07770 899859.

The Bullingdon, 162 Cowley Road, Oxford: Seratones plus Little Brother Eli & Samuel Edwards. LA Rockers for fans of Alabama Shakes and Wolf Alice. 7pm. £7.

The Cellar, Frewin Court, Oxford: Absolva, Raised By Hypocrites. Rock/ metal. 7pm. £7.

James Street Tavern, 47-48 James Street, Oxford: Porker Band, Beard Of Destiny, Richard Brotherton. 8pm. Free.

O2 Academy Oxford, 190 Cowley Road, Oxford: Elvana, Get Loose, Ravens. Elvins fronted tribute to Nirvana. 6.30pm. £8.

The Wheatsheaf, 129 High Street, Oxford: Brickwork Lizards, Force Of Mortality, Jin'Oranj. 8.15pm. £5.

SATURDAY

Buscot Park Theatre, Buscot Park, Faringdon: Thomas Graff Piano Recital. £15. 7.30pm. 01367 244655.

Cowley Workers SC, Between Towns Road, Cowley: Insync. Male and female. 9pm. 01865 772970.

Cricketers, Temple Road, Cowley: Doug Loveridge. Free. 9pm. 01865 718459.

Marston Royal British Legion, Hadlow Road, Marston: Brandy. 60's Covers. Free. 8pm. 01865 243991.

Tidd Hall, Shipton Road, Ascott-Under-Wychwood: Johnny Coppin & Mike Silver plus support from Kim Lowings & The Greenwood. Wychwood Folk Club. £12 in advance, £14 on the door. 8pm. 01993 831427.

The Britannia, 1 Lime Walk, Headington: The Messy Fridays. Pop/rock covers band. 8.30-11.30pm. Free.

The Story Museum, Pembroke Street, Oxford: Nick Cope's Songbook. Nick brings his own brand of acoustic folk-rock to the world of children's music. 10.30am. £5 (£3).

The Bullingdon, 162 Cowley Road, Oxford: Neverld. 7pm. £6 early, £8 advance.

O2 Academy Oxford, 190 Cowley Road, Oxford: Holy Moments, Kancho, Tanners Pool, The Outside, Lee Riley & Macarena, The Land Girls. Local bands showcase. 7pm. £8.

The White House, 38 Abingdon Road, Oxford: The Missing Persians. Classy original blues/rock. 8.30pm. Free.

SUNDAY

Oxford Wine Café, 38 South Parade, Summertown: Zoe Francis & Jim Mullen. Vocalist, guitar and bass. 6.30-9pm. Free.

Ark T Centre, Crowell Road, Cowley: Sea + Air, 31 hours and Khamisina. 7-11pm. £3-5.

The Bullingdon, 162 Cowley Road, Oxford: Hudson Scott, Esther Joy Lane, Cameron AG, Foals (DJs), Friendly Fires

(DJs), ODC Barryoke. Local bands and daytime disco in aid of The Brain Tumour Charity: The Michael Barry Fund. 2pm. £9.

O2 Academy Oxford, 190 Cowley Road, Oxford: Broken Brass Ensemble, K.O.G & The Zongo Brigade, Count Skylarkin. Brass band fusing traditional New Orleans jazz with hip-hop, funk & soul. 7pm. £12.

MONDAY

The Royal Blenheim, 13 St Ebbes Street, Oxford: Open Mic. Hosted by Scott Gordon. 8pm. Free.

The Bullingdon, 162 Cowley Road, Oxford: Slaves, Estrons. Punk duo on UK tour. 7pm. £1.99.

TUESDAY

The Bullingdon, 162 Cowley Road, Oxford: Rod Kelly Quartet. Piano-led jazz band. 8.30pm. Free.

The Half Moon, 18 St Clements, Oxford: Time Is Of The Essence. Jazz quartet. 9pm. Free.

The Bell Inn, Faringdon: Nick Gill/Andy Crisp Duo. Classic jazz and ragtime piano/vocals/percussion. 7.30-10pm. Free.

WEDNESDAY

University Church of St Mary the Virgin, High Street, Oxford: Virtuoso Italian pianist Nicolas Giacomelli. £ 10 (£ 5/£ 3). 7.30pm. 01865 305305.

The White House, 38 Abingdon Road, Oxford: Blues at The White House. The best local blues acts with Tony Batey & Sal Moore and friends. 8pm. Free.

Theatre

Glee Club, Hythe Bridge Street, Oxford: Sep 3, Prince Abdi, George Zach and Mike Willmot. 7.15pm. £14.50. Sep 10, Javier Jardin and Elliott Steele. 7.15pm. £14.50. 0871 472 04007.

Old Fire Station, 40 George Street, Oxford: Sep 3, *The Unhallowed Master*. Implexa Dance present an unrelenting tale of oppression, told through contemporary dance. 7.30pm. £12, £10. Sep 8, *Undermined*. Inspired by the accounts of miners who lived through the strike. 8pm. £10, £8. Sep 13-17, *Brief Lives*. 7.30pm plus 2.30pm on Sat. £15, £12 (concs). All matinee tickets: £12. 01865 263990.

Oxford Playhouse, Beaumont Street, Oxford: Until Sep 4, *Peter Pan in Scarlet*. This world premiere adaptation of the official sequel to J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*. 7.30pm. £11.50-£27. Sep 7-10, *Glasgow Girls*. Based on the true story of seven teenagers, whose lives changed forever when their school friend and her asylum-seeking family are forcibly taken from their home to be deported. Various times. £11.50-£27. Sep 12-17, *Relatively Speaking*. By Alan Ayckbourn. With Robert Powell and Liza Goddard. Various times. £15-£31. 01865 305305.

New Theatre, George Street, Oxford: Until Sep 3, *The Glenn Miller Story*. Starring Tommy Steele. 2.30pm and 7.30pm. £17.90-£48.90 plus £4 transaction fee. Sep 6-10, *The Sound of Music*. 2.30pm and 7.30pm matinees. £17.90-£48.90 plus £4 transaction fee. 0844 871 7615.

The North Wall Arts Centre, South Parade, Oxford: Sep 14, *Cargo*. Written by Tess Berry-Hart. A tense thriller. 8pm. £14; concessions £12. 01865 319450.

The Story Museum, Pembroke Street, Oxford: Sep 10, *The BFG*. 2pm. £8/£6. 01865 790050.

Chipping Norton Theatre, Spring Street, Chipping Norton: Sep 14-24, *The Rise and Fall of Little Voice*. Musical Comedy. 7.30pm and 2.30pm. £17.50, concs £15, schools £8.50. 01608 642350.

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Puritans out of luck yet again

Luckie goal gives Redditch win over Mike Ford's men

BANBURY United fell to a fourth successive Evo-Stik Southern League Premier Division defeat when they lost 1-0 at home to Redditch on Bank Holiday Monday.

The Puritans were missing four players, and they were unable to create many scoring opportunities in the game.

Redditch snatched all three points with the only goal on 62 minutes when James Fawke's back pass to Jack Harding was not firm enough and Jazz Luckie nipped in to score, firing into the far corner.

Banbury United: Harding, White, Blackstock, Nash, Fawke, Browne, Janes, Self (Bell 66), Johnson, Howards (Barcelos 55), Martin. Sub not used: Sambrook, Rimmer.

Attendance: 403.

FOOTBALL

Banbury were beaten 3-1 at Hitchin Town last Saturday.

First-half goals from Brett Donnelly and Matt Lench gave Mike Ford's men a steep hill to climb.

Despite an improved second half, Robbie Burns headed a third, before Leam Howards grabbed a late consolation, latching on to Darius Brown's through ball and beating the keeper from 12 yards.

Ricky Johnson also went close for Banbury after the break, when Felipe Barcelos crossed, but he could not keep his header down.

Banbury United: Harding, White, Lynn, Nash, Westbrook, Gunn, Janes, Self (Martin 63), Johnson, Barcelos (Howards 75), Bell (Browne 58).

Subs not used: Blackstock, Fawke.

Attendance: 350.

LATEST TABLE

EVO-STIK SOUTHERN LEAGUE

Premier Division

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|--------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Chippingham Town | 7 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 17 | 7 | 17 |
| Slough Town | 7 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 13 | 5 | 16 |
| Leamington | 7 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 10 | 3 | 16 |
| Dunstable Town | 7 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 10 | 6 | 16 |
| Frome Town | 7 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 16 | 11 | 13 |
| Chesham Utd | 7 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 10 | 6 | 12 |
| Redditch Utd | 7 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 12 | 10 | 12 |
| Merthyr Town | 6 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 14 | 8 | 10 |
| St Neots Town | 7 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 14 | 13 | 10 |
| St Ives Town | 6 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 8 | 10 |
| Weymouth | 7 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 8 | 11 | 10 |
| Kettering Town | 7 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 10 | 10 |
| Banbury Utd | 7 | 3 | 0 | 4 | 8 | 7 | 9 |
| Stratford Town | 7 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 10 | 10 | 9 |
| Biggleswade Town | 7 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 10 | 10 | 8 |
| Hitchin Town | 7 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 11 | 12 | 8 |
| Basingstoke Town | 7 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 9 | 12 | 8 |
| King's Lynn Town | 7 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 10 | 15 | 8 |
| Cambridge City | 7 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 9 | 11 | 6 |
| Cinderford Town | 7 | 2 | 0 | 5 | 12 | 16 | 6 |
| Kings Langley | 7 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 11 | 11 | 5 |
| Hayes & Yeading | 7 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 9 | 5 |
| Dorchester Town | 7 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 16 | 4 |
| Cirencester Town | 7 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 7 | 19 | 4 |



Leam Howards scored Banbury United's consolation goal in their 3-1 defeat at Hitchin Town

Banbury bid halted by the rain

CRICKET

BANBURY were in control at home to Reading in Division 1 of the Home Counties Premier League before heavy rain arrived.

Luke Ryan took three wickets in one over to restrict the visitors to 74-5.

But rain saved relegated Reading from defeat, after they were struggling on 83-7 from 35 overs.

READING

| | | |
|---|-------|----|
| P Chima b Wright | ..... | 6 |
| M Andersson c Hawtin b Wright | ..... | 27 |
| R Singh lbw West | ..... | 16 |
| A Zaka b Ryan | ..... | 13 |
| A Dosanjh c&b Ryan | ..... | 0 |
| J Beaven lbw Ryan | ..... | 0 |
| M Khalid c Ryan b Clarke | ..... | 1 |
| K Malik not out | ..... | 4 |
| W Ahmed not out | ..... | 2 |
| Extras | ..... | 14 |
| Total (7 wkt, 35 ovrs) | ..... | 83 |
| Fall: 140, 241, 374, 474, 574, 674, 781. | | |
| Bowling: 60-230, Taylor 30-150, Wright 82-192, Blanchard 4-250, Ryan 8-63, West 41-9, Clarke 2-041. | | |
| Reading 6pts, Reading 6 | | |



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ARIES

Mar 21-Apr 19

The home comes under the spotlight and who lives there or stays there could come into question. Careful of involving too many outsiders in what should be a discussion for just two. There is more to a close one's recent drama than events on both Thursday and Friday should soon reveal. Accept apologies from family this weekend. Ring now to hear why it's worth bowing down to close ones.

0906 585 4360

TAURUS

Apr 20-May 20

Mercury is not making it easy for you to speak your mind to close one, but that's because the past and present are becoming merged due to an influx of emotions. You find it hard to know if you are blaming a current face for a past person's misdemeanours. Venus helps you to get back on track on Friday when you see what needs to be done and how. Ring now for structure and sense.

0906 585 4361

GEMINI

May 21-Jun 20

I can see from your chart that you've betrayed a lot of down, but hold fire as you are learning all and sundry. The person in question is really going to be a bit of a pain in the neck. Venus helps you to be wise to tread water. Children and the younger generation in general share good news about their future which grants you more freedom. Give me call to reveal more now.

0906 585 4362

CANCER

Jun 21-Jul 22

If you think you can, you will and if you think you can't, you won't. You have been building up new faces to be stronger, than may actually be due, to this fact, you've missed your chance to push the boundaries in your career. Second chances don't come often, but do come from Thursday when you're faced with the chance to jump in the driving seat again. Ring now for news in full.

0906 585 4363

LEO

Jul 23-Aug 22

The need for a change to your usual routine could see you telling a white lie in order to get out of promises and commitments made previously. News from far away gives your career a much needed boost, but may require you to contribute some of your own funds to show your level of commitment. New faces with strange sounding names or accents boost your mood. Ring now for more predictions.

0906 585 4364

VIRGO

Aug 23-Sep 22

You may have to show support to a younger person for something which you don't really have faith in. You're doing a good thing Virgo and it shows how very selfless a sign such as you can be. Instant attractions this weekend bring all you've been doing into question. Take it slow. Time is on your side, even if it doesn't seem so. Ring now to hear who I know has hurt you recently.

0906 585 4365

LIBRA

Sep 23-Oct 22

A money matter which has led to a few sleepless nights is given a boost by someone you didn't think even knew your full name. Let alone your personal situation. Try to keep manners to the fore as first impressions can make all the difference as to how your week goes. You may want to check your passport is in date. You'll need it sooner than you think. Ring now to hear whose influence is negative.

0906 585 4366

SCORPIO

Oct 23-Nov 21

An array of mixed emotions is making it difficult for you to know what the right thing to do is in current dramas. Nothing is the answer Scorpio, until you have more proof. Your ruling planet Mars helps you to make a crossover in work which, this time, was not even a possibility. Ring now to hear why I want you to delay what you're not happy with in home affairs.

0906 585 4367

SAGITTARIUS

Nov 22-Dec 21

I can see from your chart that you've been betrayed a lot this week, then the bigger things will fall into place naturally. News of a birth or promotion shows you're right to hold judgement on a close one's situation. You meet with people from your past by accident and they bring with them news which helps you find closure and peace. Ring now to find out how exciting your house of love is looking.

0906 585 4368

CAPRICORN

Dec 22-Jan 19

If you can take care of the little things this week, then the bigger things will fall into place naturally. News of a birth or promotion shows you're right to hold judgement on a close one's situation. You meet with people from your past by accident and they bring with them news which helps you find closure and peace. Ring now to find out how exciting your house of love is looking.

0906 585 4369

AQUARIUS

Jan 20-Feb 18

Don't leave arguments to stew, but face problems head on with calm and respect. It can see you coming out the winner even if you aren't one hundred per cent in the right to begin with. An idea you have midweek is the seed for greater things, so write down what you are feeling and focus on the long term, not just the short term. Ring now. I want to talk about last weekend's confrontations.

0906 585 4370

PISCES

Feb 19-Mar 20

It may feel as if you have no alternative but to rely on others, but I know that there are several choices about to come your way. Family may prove difficult, but dig a little deeper on Tuesday and Thursday and you will find out what is really at the root of their emotive state. An expensive time in home affairs, but a good long term investment. Ring now. I have so much more to tell you.

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Gill Oliver
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wisteria- and vine-covered pergola and the grounds also include two lawns with colourful flower and shrub borders, lavender, box and yew hedging.

Gowers Close is built of Hornton Stone, with a thatched roof and has a

number of large windows looking out across the gardens.

Once part of the village Court House, the property includes many period features such as a double front door, exposed timbers, stone walls, flagstone floors and leaded-light windows.

The drawing room has an inglenook fireplace with original bread oven and double doors to the terrace.

There is also a study, dining room with wood-burning stove, kitchen/breakfast room with Aga and office.

The house is ranged over three levels and other highlights include the double front door and entrance hall laid with flagstones and another corridor with French windows looking on to the garden.

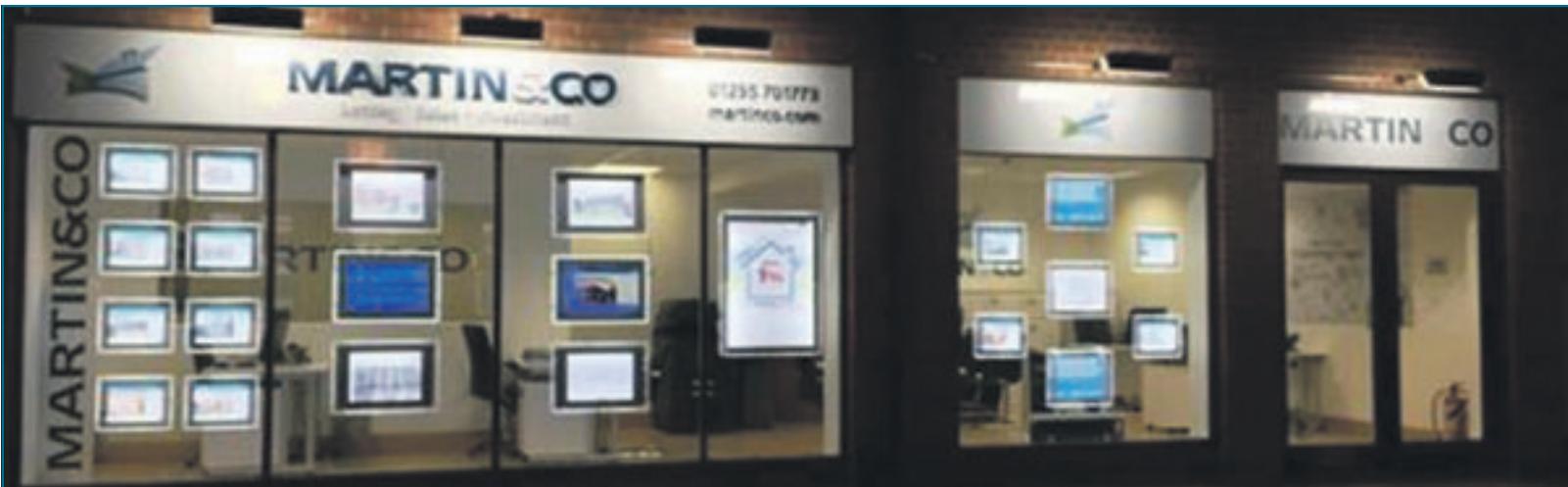
One of the bedrooms is on the ground floor and has an en suite

bathroom. The master bedroom on the first floor has a vaulted ceiling, exposed beams and a floor-to-ceiling bay window.

Also on this floor are two more bedrooms, one double and one single plus two family bathrooms.

Gowers Close is on the market at £875,000. For more information call agents Savills on 01295 228000 or see Savills.com

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Used Car Road Test

by Jonathan Crouch



Ford's focus on excellence



THE problem with setting a benchmark is that it's a tough trick to repeat. Jaguar could never quite reach the heights it achieved with the E-Type, Audi had the same problem trying to reprise the Quattro and Peugeot must have resigned itself to the fact that every hot hatch it ever built would be judged to be some way short of its 205 GTi. Ford's unassailable high is probably the first generation Focus. Yes, it was a genuinely great car, but its achievements were helped in many ways by the sheer ineptitude of stiffies like the Vauxhall Astra and the Nissan Almera that it was tasked to knock over.

As its rivals closed on it, each successive generation of Focuses has become more talented yet, rather cruelly, not as highly regarded. The third generation car is a case in point. It's a genuinely talented all-rounder but no longer is it the default pick in its class. It's nevertheless a quite brilliant used choice. Read on to find out why.

The History

The Focus was originally launched

way back in 1998, revolutionising the way the family hatchbacks drove, making itself a fixture at the top of the UK sales charts in the process. The second generation version arrived in 2004, upping the quality, offering more space and taming down the wacky interior styling that had dated quite badly. After seeing Ford through the credit crunch, this model made way for version three, which hit dealers in March of 2011.

Upon launch, the range comprised five door hatchbacks and estates. The engine line-up opened with the 105PS 1.6 Ti-VCT petrol engine, with a punchier 125PS version also offered. The 150PS 1.6-litre EcoBoost powerplant was the quickest petrol engine you could initially get. Diesel units comprised the 95 and 115PS versions of the 1.6-litre TDCi and 140 or 163PS versions of the 2.0-litre TDCi lump. The latter was the only model to be offered with the option of the 2.0-litre PowerShift twin clutch transmission.

The range quickly filled out with a clever three cylinder 1.0-litre EcoBoost petrol variant, then with

the hot hatch 250PS 2.0-litre ST model which arrived in March 2012, quickly followed by an estate version. A Zetec S trim level arrived at the end of 2012 and by the start of 2014, Ford announced one million sales of the third generation Focus in Europe alone. The Focus ST was Europe's best-selling hot hatch and the Focus badge had become the biggest selling nameplate around the world. The updated facelift version of this car was announced in summer 2014.

What To Look For

The Focus has forged an excellent reputation for reliability with only the odd glitch preventing it from reaching toy honours. Test clutches to make sure they're not at the end of their travel and ensure that all belt servicing has been performed on the nose. The ST will require a bit more of a once over. Check for creaking front tyres, accident damage and performance modifications that could invalidate the warranty.

On The Road

Comfort and refinement were the

key criteria when designing this chassis and the engineers have certainly succeeded in that task. Drop into the driver's seat and you'll initially notice that it's lower set than the previous car, while the sharply-raked windscreen pillars are bulkier than is ideal. One thing all engine choices have in common is a 'torque vectoring' system. This works by nipping at the brake of the inside front wheel as you turn into a corner, helping to reduce understeer. You might well notice it drag the car into the apex on wet roads if you're pressing hard. The electric power steering system is very quick and accurate, if trading a little something in ultimate feedback. Ride quality and refinement are massively improved over its predecessor.

The ST is a real gem. The headline figure is that peak power has been raised from the old ST's 222bhp figure to a rather beefier 247bhp. You'll probably expect the torque from a 2.0-litre turbo four to be inferior to that of a 2.5-litre turbo five but where the old car made 320Nm, the EcoBoost engine can muster 360Nm. Less weight, more power and better

aerodynamics inevitably translate into better performance and the 2.0-litre ST will launch to 60mph in less than six seconds. What's perhaps more interesting than the raw figures is the work that's gone into making this four-cylinder engine sound just as exciting as the old five pot unit.

Overall

The third-generation Ford Focus is a car that rewards a little research beforehand. The diesels are uniformly good, and get better the more power they develop. The ST is a class act in the GTi sector but buy with care. The 1.0-litre petrol engine is a technical wonder that's somewhat marred by so-so real world economy. Our pick would be 2.0-litre diesel hatchbacks and estates, or the Zetec-S and ST sports models. There's a lot of used stock available, so you can afford to be picky and brutal when negotiating on price. Go hard or go home.

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